

REMARKS

Claim Status

Claims 1, 3-13, 15, 16, and 19-21 are pending in the present application. No additional claims fee is believed to be due.

Claims 14, 17, and 18 are canceled without prejudice.

Claim 16 is amended to be in independent form incorporating all the limitation of prior pending Claim 14. Claim 19 is amended to be dependent on Claim 16. Support for the amendment can be found in the claims as originally filed.

It is believed these changes do not involve any introduction of new matter. Consequently, entry of these changes is believed to be in order and is respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and § 103(a) Over Mende (5,180,620)

Claims 14, 17, 18 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and § 103(a) over Mende (5,180,620). Claims 14, 17, and 18 are canceled without prejudice thereby rendering the rejection of these claims moot.

The Applicants do not acquiesce to the Office Action's assertion that prior pending Claims 14, 17, 18, and 19 are not patentable under 35 U.S.C. §§102(b) and 103(a). The Applicants have canceled Claims 14, 17, and 18 only to advance prosecution. The Applicants maintain that prior pending Claims 14, 17, 18, and 19 are allowable over the prior art, as cited.

Claim 19 is amended to be dependent on Claim 16. Claim 16 was indicated as being allowable if written in independent form. Therefore, the Applicants submit that Claim 19 is also allowable.

Conclusion

This response represents an earnest effort to place the present application in proper form and to distinguish the invention as claimed from the applied references. In

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view of the foregoing, entry of the amendments presented herein, reconsideration of this application, and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Signature

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